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FM AMEMBASSY ASUNCION
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 7679
INFO RUCNMER/MERCOSUR COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS ASUNCION 000157

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FOR WHA/BSC MDASHBACH, INL/LP DHOOKER

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [SNAR](#) [AFIN](#) [PREL](#) [KCRIM](#) [PA](#)

SUBJECT: PARAGUAY'S 2008 FOURTH QUARTER INL REPORT

I. SUMMARY: The Government of Paraguay's National Anti-Drug Secretariat (SENAD) continued to work diligently on drug enforcement activities in the last quarter of 2008. Seizures of both cocaine and marijuana remained steady and authorities arrested numerous drug traffickers.

President Fernando Lugo's new administration has shown serious interest in strengthening its anti-narcotics efforts. INL continues to support SENAD's active demand reduction program, and provides operational support to the Specialized Technical Unit (UTE). INL also continues to provide assistance for the Trafficking in Person Program (TIP) run by the Woman's Secretariat. END SUMMARY.

II. PROGRAM DISCUSSION:

A. Demand Reduction:

In October and November, SENAD's Prevention Program provided a total of 324 workshops, reaching 8,976 students, teachers and parents. It conducted six educational workshops for 144 teachers on the social problems of drug consumption. It also coordinated activities for prevention of drug use in 40 educational institutions and disseminated 2,395 informational pamphlets to teachers and counselors to use during workshops as well as three media releases regarding drug abuse. No workshops occurred during the month of December due to school vacations.

SENAD's prevention unit continued working on its main objective to reach hundreds of participants each month in Central and Amambay Departments. The program included formal workshops, informal sessions, public seminars, and the distribution of informational materials.

B. Narcotics detection canine (K-9) program:

The canine program continues to have success in seizures and to enhance the overall efforts of SENAD's drug interdiction program. This quarter, canine alerts led to the seizure of seven kilos of cocaine, six kilos of ephedrine, and the arrests of seven suspects for these crimes.

C. Law Enforcement:

On October 2, 2008, SENAD seized five kilos of ephedrine contained in packages of tea hidden in a suitcase belonging to Mexican citizen Leobardo Gaxiola Lopez at Asuncion's airport. The transport route was Asuncion-Sao Paulo-Mexico. Authorities detained two additional Mexican suspects at a hotel in Asuncion.

Between October 13 and 24, 2008, SENAD conducted marijuana eradication operations at various locations in the Amambay and Canindeyu Departments. Although authorities made no arrests in these operations, SENAD cleared 125 hectares of planted marijuana and destroyed 12,810 kilos of marijuana, 525 kilos of marijuana seeds, six hydraulic presses and 42 tents.

On November 7, 2008, a search warrant executed at the DHL storage facility at the Asuncion airport resulted in the seizure of two packages with a total of one kilo of cocaine. The cocaine was hidden in sewing kit spools of thread. The two packages had a final destination of Lagos, Nigeria. Authorities made no arrests in this operation.

On November 12, 2008, SENAD seized five kilos of cocaine from Peruvian citizens Enrique Osmar Lazo Perez and Martin Hinostroza Rivera at the Customs control post in Mariscal Estigarribia.

On December 5, 2008, SENAD arrested Brazilians Sergio De Souza AKA Da Nemen Costeira, Danilo De Souza, Tiago Cordeiro AKA Calcinha, and Rodrigo De Rosa Oliveira AKA Rata, all suspected of being members of "COMANDO VERMELHO," one of the most powerful drug trafficking operations in Brazil. The authorities caught the suspects driving a Suzuki Swift car without a license plate. SENAD released the suspects into Brazilian custody at the Friendship Bridge.

On December 17, 2008, SENAD agents seized 11 kilos of cocaine and two vehicles in Fernando de la Mora, Central Department. SENAD arrested Paraguayans Arlindo Villanueva Caceres and Marcelo Carballo Gimenez and Brazilian Rony Freitas.

D. Auto theft:

News media reported an average of three auto thefts per day in November, for an average of 90 cars per month or 1,080 cars per year within the country.

E. Border control:

Border controls continue to be weak. Control posts coincide with Paraguayan Customs offices at the main points of entry/exit of the country, leaving long stretches of Paraguay's borders with Argentina, Bolivia, and Brazil unattended.

F. Domestic violence and trafficking in persons:

INL continues to support the anti-TIP program providing funds to cover operational costs for a shelter in Asuncion run by the Woman's Secretariat and funding the publication of pamphlets to be released among TIP victims and the general population. The shelter's operational costs for the months of August through November were USD 2,000.

G. Intellectual property rights:

During the last quarter of 2008, the Specialized Technical Unit (UTE) made significant progress in investigating major traders of counterfeit goods. UTE seized pirated goods and assets such as hi-tech equipment, computer software, general electronics, and other consumer goods valued at USD 3,948,746.

During the calendar year, UTE received USD 28,203 in operational support and seized a total of USD 18,502,607 in counterfeit and pirated goods mostly from intense enforcement efforts in and near Ciudad Del Este. INL continues to provide UTE with funds for operational support.

H. Money laundering and financial crimes:

INL funds will support an upgrade of SEPRELAD's existing financial crime software currently in use, including technical assistance. SEPRELAD is hoping to have banks linked to the financial crime software by the first quarter of 2009.

III. TRAINING:

This past quarter INL Asuncion sent two SENAD canine handlers for a ten-week training course at the Regional Counter-narcotics Training Center in Laguna Pino, Guatemala from October 6 - December 12, 2008.

NAS Guatemala provided the training and INL Asuncion provided the funding at a total cost of USD 9,346.

IV. MISCELLANEOUS ISSUES:

Annual 2008 SENAD statistics

Cocaine Seized (kg):	278
Marijuana Seized (kg):	172,460
Marijuana Crops Destroyed (Has):	1,725
Marijuana Related (kg):	701,800
(Wax, seeds and plants)	
Total Arrests:	419

